

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:PDMOLINEAUX/HLK
APPROVED BY NEA - ALFRED L. ATHERTON, JR.
NEA/ARP:FMDICKMAN
PM/SAS:DFARNHAM
DOD/ISA:RMCDONALD
NEA:SSOBER
S/S -O:PP SARROS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 183047

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MARR, MU, GW

SUBJECT: OMANI REQUEST FOR TOW

REF: KUWAIT 2543, KUWAIT 2545, KUWAIT 3073, MUSCAT 437,
MUSCAT 438

KUWAIT PASS MUSCAT

1. AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE OMANI REQUEST, WE
HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES DO
NOT WARRANT DIVERTING TOW LAUNCHERS FROM U.S. STOCKS.
FYI: U.S. ARMY CURRENTLY HAS ONLY 17 PERCENT OF ITS
AUTHORIZED TOW LAUNCHERS. END FYI.

2. ACCORDINGLY, YOU SHOULD INFORM OMANI GOVERNMENT THAT:

A) USG REGRETS THAT TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILES AND LAUNCHERS
NOT AVAILABLE FROM U.S. STOCKS FOR DIVERSION TO OMAN AT
THIS TIME. SUPPLY IS EXTREMELY SHORT. B) IF OMANIS WISH
US TO DO SO, USG IS PREPARED TO SUPPORT OMANI REQUESTS FOR

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TOW FROM OTHER SOURCES. (FYI: ALTHOUGH WE NOT SANGUINE

OF RESULTS, WE ARE WILLING TO INITIATE APPROACH TO WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT. END FYI.) C) IF OMAN WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LAW MISSILES AS SUBSTITUTE FOR TOW'S, USG WILL TAKE ACTION TO DETERMINE AVAILABILITY. (FYI: USG WILL ATTEMPT TO DIVERT FROM EXISTING COMMITMENT. END FYI.)
3. FYI: WE APPRECIATE IMPORTANCE OF TOW FOR OMAN FROM

PSYCHOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW, AND FULLY REALIZE EXISTENCE PDRY TANK FORCE POSES POTENTIAL THREAT TO OMANIS IN DHOFAR, PARTICULARLY POORLY EQUIPPED BORDER OUTPOSTS. HOWEVER, WE NOTE:

(A) OMAN HAS ALTERNATIVE MEANS DEFENSE AGAINST TANKS, TO INCLUDE AIRCRAFT, ARTILLERY, AND RECOILLESS RIFLE.

(B) PDRY TANK THREAT LIMITED IN TERMS OF NUMBER OF TANKS IN AREA, BY SUITABILITY OF TERRAIN, AND BY LOGISTIC PROBLEMS PDRY WOULD ENCOUNTER IF ATTEMPTED USE TANKS IN INTERIOR, FOR EXAMPLE AT HABARUT.

(C) PDRY USE OF TANKS IN DHOFAR WOULD SERIOUSLY WEAKEN CREDIBILITY PDRY PRETENSE DHOFAR REBELLION IS ENTIRELY INDIGENOUS. THIS WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE INsofar AS IT MIGHT PROVOKE RALLYING SUPPORT FROM OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT TO OMAN CAUSE.

(D) PDRY RECOURSE TO TANK WARFARE WOULD BE ABANDONMENT OF GUERRILLA WARFARE DOCTRINE. WHEREAS IMMEDIATE SHOCK EFFECT MIGHT BE ACHIEVED, USE OF TANKS WOULD NOT HELP PDRY AND PFLOAG IN BASIC TASK OF POPULAR MOBILIZATION.

(E) GENERAL CREASEY HIMSELF HAS NEVER RAISED TANK ISSUE WITH U.S. REPRESENTATIVES, SUGGESTING HE DOES NOT REGARD IT AS SIGNIFICANT FACTOR. END FYI.

4. PLEASE ADVISE RE OMANI REACTION. INGERSOLL

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